[English]

Oil Import

869. SHRI MADHAVRAO SCINDIA :
SHRI SYDAIAH KOTA :
SHRI SATYAJITSINH DULIPSINH GAEKWAD :

Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Forex loses mount with archaic oil import norms" appearing in the *Indian Express* dated June 10, 1997;

(b) if so, the facts of the matter reported therein; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to update and modify the procurement procedures adopted in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI JANESHWAR MISHRA) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) IOC, the sole canalising agency, organises imports of crude oil and petroleum products as per the Oil Economic Budget approved by Government.

Import of crude oil is arranged by IOC through term contracts with National Oil Companies of oil producing countries having exportable surplus. These purchases are made at the official selling price prevailing for the month of loading. Balance requirements are purchased through international competitive tenders from parties registered with IOC based on economic/commercial considerations.

Import of petroleum products is arranged partly through term contracts with National Oil Companies of oil producing countries having exportable surplus and partly through international tenders from registered parties. Efforts are always made to source maximum requirements through such term contracts. The balance requirements are met through term tenders/monthly tenders from registered parties.

The purchases through tenders are made with approval of empowered Standing Committee and in accordance with the procedure set up by ESC.

(c) In view of the complexity and changing pattern of oil trades in the international market, it has been decided to review the existing purchase system through a reputed international consultant so as to ensure that the best purchase practices followed in the international market are adopted by IOC. M/s. Arthur Anderson have been appointed as consultant for this purpose by IOC to review existing system of purchase etc. and make recommendations based on practices generally followed in the Oil Industry, so as to upgrade the system to international standards.

[Translation]

Maintenance of N.Hs.

870. PROF. PREM SINGH CHANDUMAJRA :
SHRI PANKAJ CHOWDHARY :
SHRIMATI KETAKI DEVI SINGH :
JUSTICE GUMAN MAL LODHA :

Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether National Highways in country are in a dilapildated condition for want of proper maintenance;

(b) if so, the opinion of the Government in this regard and the reasons for not having proper arrangements of maintenance;

(c) whether the Government have formulated any action plan at national level for keeping the national highways in good condition;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF SURFACE TRANSPORT (SHRI T.G. VENKATRAMAN) : (a) to (e) The overall availability of funds for the maintenance and repairs of National Highways is of the order of 50% of the requirement as per approved norms. However, efforts are being made to maintain the National Highways in a traffic-worthy condition round the year within the available funds.

Repairing of Muzaffarpur-Raxsaul N.H.

871. SHRI RADHA MOHAN SINGH : Will the Minister of SURFACE TRANSPORT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Muzaffarpur-Raxsaul National Highway, the main road leading to Nepal is in a damaged condition due to which accidents have been occurring on this road; and

(b) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government for repairing this National Highway?